

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SP-02 AID-05 EB-07 NSC-05 CIEP-01

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1709

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2198

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, EFIN, EAID, CG

SUBJECT: STATUS OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP MEETINGS

1. WHEN IBRD DIVISION CHIEF WIEHEN WAS FIRST THROUGH HERE LAST OCTOBER HE WAS PUSHING SERIES OF "PREPARATORY" MEETINGS OF CONSULATIVE GROUP MEMBERS WITH AIMS (A) OF ESTABLISHING CLOSER CURRENT COORDINATION OF CG ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, (B) OF IMPROVING LOCAL IBRD REP GUETTA'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN CG FRAMEWORK AND (C) OF BUILDING, ON SECTOR BASIS, TOWARD MORE MEANINGFUL ANNUAL MEETINGS OF CG WHERE OVERALL POLICY LAID OUT.

2. GOZ RESPONDED FAVORABLY, AS DID ALL CG AMBASSADORS, TO WIEHEN PROPOSAL, BUT NO MEETINGS HAVE TRANSPIRED-- DUE MAINLY TO FAST CHANGING ECONOMIC FINANCIAL SITUATION. ON MARCH 14, IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S QUESTION THIS SUBJECT, GUETTA SAID THAT IT WAS HIS JUDGMENT THAT ZAIRIANS HAVE NOT BEEN AND ARE NOT NOW PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN CG "PREPARATORY" MEETING BECAUSE THEY DO NOT WISH TO BE PUT IN INEVITABLE POSITION OF EXPLAINING FINANCIAL DISTRESS, OR DISASTER IN TRANSPORT SECTOR ESPECIALLY. IN ADDITION, GUETTA SAID, IBRD ITSELF LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR DELAY SINCE BANK

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TEAM HAS NOT COMPLETED ITS REPORT ON ZAIRIAN ECONOMY WHICH WILL

FORM BASIS OF ANNUAL CG MEETING. AND THUS EVEN FORMAL GATHERING OF CG, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR MAY, COULD NOT TAKE PLACE BEFORE SEPTEMBER.

3. GUETTA DID SAY, HOWEVER, THAT CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION AND FACT THAT CG MEMBERS HOLD "91 PERCENT OF ZAIRE'S EXTERNAL DEBT" MEANT THAT MEMBERS OF GROUP SHOULD MEET TO COORDINATE ROLES IN MUCH NEEDED STABILIZATION PROGRAMS--BUT NOT IN TRADITIONAL CG CONTEXT. AMBASSADOR ALLOWED AS HOW SUCH CONSULTATION COULD BE IN CARDS, ASSUMING THE ACCEPTANCE IF IMF LED STABILIZATION PROGRAM, BUT SUGGESTED STRONGLY THAT CG "PREPARATORY" MEETINGS ON SECTOR BASIS STILL NECESSARY; IF TRANSPORT SECTOR TOO TOUCHY, WHY NOT AGRICULTURE? GUETTA AGREED THAT IDEA HAD MERIT, AND SAID HE WOULD BE WATCHING FOR SIGNS OF ZAIRIAN RECEPTIVITY WHICH COULD PERMIT HIM TO MAKE MOVE.

4. COMMENT: GUETTA IS RIGHT ABOUT ZAIRIAN RELUCTANCE IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES TO MEET REGULARLY ON PROGRESS OF ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS, BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE GUETTA WHO HAS EXCELLENT RELATIONS HERE IS NOT DISPOSED TO PRESS GOZ ON ANY BUT CRUCIAL ISSUES. WIEHEN MET WITH US DURING HIS LAST VISIT HERE MARCH 5, BUT WE DID NOT PURSUE THIS SUBJECT WITH HIM. SUGGEST IT WORTHWHILE FOR AF/C TO RAISE IN GENERAL TERMS WITH WIEHEN TO SEE IF HE AND GUETTA ARE ON SAME WAVE LENGTH. ANOTHER SECTOR WORTH EXPLORING JOINTLY WOULD BE "PRODUCTION, HEALTH AND NUTRITION."
HINTON

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